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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
INFORMATION REPORT

25X1A

COUNTRY Belgian Congo

SUBJECT Leopoldville/Inflation/Portuguese Residents/Labor Unions
and Conditions/Belgian Native Policy/Import-Export Sta-
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1. "Inflation"

We learned that an index of costs is kept in Leopoldville for Europeans and for Africans. The African index is not published. The European index is quite unrealistic; it is based on a family of three without a car, and with two bicycles, with no frigid-
aire and with a heavy starch diet. The index six months ago (May 1952) was 290 (on
the basis of 100 in 1935), and is now at 300. So inflation is bad. The Governor
General and the Conseil recommended that price control be inaugurated, but Brussels
turned the recommendation down, which was probably in line with their laissez-faire
approach. The American Consul likened the boom here to the Barbary Coast: a real
free-for-all. The Export-Import Bank made a loan a year ago of \$5 million for road
building.

2. "The consular officials find using locally produced food is not as cheap as it seems
at first; eggs are often rotten, carrots very small, etc. A lot of frozen foods are
used.

3. "Portuguese"

The Portuguese are apparently more aggressive business people than are the others;
there are a lot of them here. They get along well with the Belgians, but they are not
accepted socially. They are better able to stand the climate than the Belgians, and
stay an average of seven years before going home. The Belgians go home six months out
of every three years, and feel that this is not often enough. Apparently there are
more Flemish Belgians here than there are French - probably a lot more vigorous.

4. "The Catholic Church has been fairly vocal about demanding rights for natives. They
[the Church, we suppose] want to stay here even after the Belgians leave. Both Prot-
estant and Catholic schools get subsidies from the state which are supposedly equal.

5. "Labor Unions and Conditions"

Labor unions follow the pattern of unions in Belgium itself, and are a part of the
Belgian Union: Federation Generale du Travailleurs du Belgique is the Socialist van;
the other union is Confederation Social du Federation Congo. These are confined mostly
to European workers. The native unions are limited to "study groups". Laws control
the modes of employment for both European and native. The Government would prefer to

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- 2 -

work by decree than through collective bargaining. Salaries of natives here now run about 1500 francs a month, as against a previous 500 francs a month. This is believed to be unfortunate, because the boys are getting spoiled and make demands. For instance, Mr. (fnu) Mallon, the Consul General, had to give his boy a bicycle in order to keep him. The use of labor is conspicuously better here than it was in the east. Here they use wheelbarrows, cement mixers, etc. All work is done by hand in the east.

6. "Belgian Policy"
Mallon stated that the Belgians have the natives under pretty strict control. Natives must be in their villages by a certain hour in the evening, or be given a laissez passer to permit them to go in late. Mallon gave his boys some old underwear the other day, and they were arrested for stealing because he did not give them a pass. Natives are now permitted to drink European beer. It is hoped that this will stop them from brewing their own alcoholic beverages.
7. "With regard to the 'evolues' (evolved natives), there are many Africans who call themselves this, but the stage varies greatly for them. Mallon thinks about 10 percent of the native population of Leopoldville have cartes d'immatriculation. The Belgians promote the natives to far higher technical positions than do the Rhodesians. Natives here do electrical and mechanical work, etc., jobs which would be reserved for Europeans in the Rhodesias.
8. "The present Governor keeps entirely to himself. His wife is not here, and he does not entertain. He will not accept invitations to private homes, or accept invitations to functions except on a national holiday. He thinks that there is much more talk about getting out on the part of the Belgians than there was before World War II.
9. "Imports - Exports, 1952"

Exports from the Belgian Congo/First Six Months 1952

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Value (Belgian francs)</u>
Copper	2,689,274
Film prod.	1,271,124
Cotton	958,358
Tin and ore	890,363
Cobalt	732,390
Coffee	593,727
Ind. diamonds	395,589
Gold	366,344
All others	1,648,512
	<u>9,545,731</u>

<u>Country of Destination</u>	<u>Value</u>
Belgium	5,639,762
US	999,308
UK	880,072
France	533,470
Lobito-Beira	387,417
Germany	372,545
South Africa	128,512
All others	604,625
	<u>9,545,731</u>

Imports into Belgian Congo - First Six Months 1952

<u>Commodity</u>	<u>Value (Belgian francs)</u>
Machinery	1,974,119
Vehicles	1,647,356
Metal Mfr.	1,169,061
Textiles	1,002,815
Petroleum Prod.	435,643
All others	3,740,206
	<u>9,969,200</u>

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- 3 -

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<u>Country of Origin</u>	<u>Value</u>
Belgium	3,612,226
US	2,516,630
UK	704,601
Japan	358,929
Germany	358,701
South Africa	344,160
France	317,418
Netherlands	278,219
All others	<u>1,393,116</u>
	9,969,200

This is about the first time there has been an unfavorable import-export balance. It is believed due to the heavy import of goods for the ten-year plan."

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